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DN EXTRA

November 2004

Fool's gold

Pawn shop finds stolen paralympic medal

Abuse promise

Police get tough on cruelty

Cash control

Make the best of direct payments

DN EXTRA...

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Golden retriever

ROGER BOOL



Paralympic cyclist Darren Kenny (above) has had his gold medal returned after it was stolen as he left the British Olympic Association's Gold Ball.

Mr Kenny was mugged by a gang of six after the event at the Savoy Hotel in central London last month. They took his gold medal, mobile phone and cash.

A few days later the Metropolitan police contacted Mr Kenny to tell him they had his medal.

He was told that one of the thieves had tried to sell the medal to a pawn shop, but the shopkeeper had read in a newspaper that the medal was stolen and told the man to come back later. The shopkeeper then phoned the police, who were waiting for the thief when he returned.

Mr Kenny said: "I couldn't believe it when the police phoned. I never thought I would get it back. It's heavy but I don't suppose it worth much to anyone else. To me it's irreplaceable and very precious."

DN CAMPAIGN

Police promise

A senior officer has pledged to raise police awareness of an offence that punishes the ill-treatment and neglect of adults with learning difficulties in care homes.

The offence has been law since the 1950s, but is rarely used. It is now being updated with stiffer sentences through the new Mental Health Bill. But our campaign hopes to raise awareness and increase the maximum sentences further to match those for similar offences against children.

Richard Crompton, who is responsible for vulnerable witnesses issues for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), spoke to *DN* after the Justice for People with Learning Difficulties conference in Nottingham. He said there were "gaps in knowledge and procedure and expertise that have to be filled" in relation to the offence.

Mr Crompton, who is deputy chief constable of Lincolnshire police, said raising awareness

would "absolutely" be included in his ACPO work.

Mark Brookes, advocacy project worker for Values Into Action, one of the organisers of the conference, had told the audience how police often still failed to act when crimes were committed against people with learning difficulties.

One person had been kicked and punched to the ground, and another had a lit firework placed in his coat pocket.

Mr Brookes said: "Training needs to be right across the board for police, social services, lawyers, judges and the Crown Prosecution Service."

** A new directory for people working in adult protection has been produced by the Practitioner Alliance Against Abuse of Vulnerable Adults. It sets out strategies for protecting adults from abuse and exploitation that have been shown to work well in projects across England. Download the directory at www.pavauk.org.uk*



On the buses: Swimmer Jim Anderson (centre) shows his four Paralympic gold medals to the crowd as Great Britain's Paralympic and Olympic stars parade through central London together. Thousands of people lined the route last month to celebrate the athletes' success in Athens.

On the cover: Guide dog Wanda has been named guide dog of the year for her "outstanding loyalty, devotion and flexibility" in helping owner Mhairi Thurston look after her three daughters. The former teacher, who lost her sight four years ago, said: "Getting Wanda has completely transformed my life and she has helped me feel like part of society again." The awards were organised by The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association.

Charity publicity pact

Thirteen charities that provide specialist information to disabled people, including refugees, have formed a consortium to publicise each other's services.

The idea came from Ann Darnbrough, director of the National Information Forum (NIF). She said: "Many invaluable information services exist but are little known among the people they serve."

The charities are all London-based, but applications from others further afield are welcome. "The only criteria are that you should be quite small and in need of becoming better known," she said.

Members so far are Artsline, Asian People with Disabilities Alliance, Disability Alliance,



Disability Law Service, Employability Forum, NIF, Outsiders Trust (a club which helps disabled people to gain confidence and find partners), RETAS (services to refugees and asylum seekers), Ricability (research and information on equipment), Roadpeace, Skill, Spinal Injuries Association and StartHere (delivers

information electronically).

* Winners of this year's Getting the Message Across awards, organised by NIF, included the charity Changing Faces for its booklet on disfigurement, *Facing Changes*; Outsiders Trust for a website that "provides information many need but few, if any, supply"; Arthritis Care for its range of publications that involve people with arthritis; and the charity ITAAL (Is There An Accessible Loo?) for its directory of accessible loos and website.

At the awards ceremony in October, the annual Duncan Guthrie memorial lecture was given by Lord Alf Morris, the first minister for disabled people.

Contact NIF on 020 7402 6681 or visit www.nif.org.uk

Letter from Brussels

Richard Howitt



Despite EU promises to create an "information society for all", accessible data is a long way off for many disabled people.

For example, deaf people have no secure access to emergency services across Europe; blind and partially sighted people are less able to use computer software than ten years ago; digital television excludes nearly five per cent of viewers because of analogue subtitles, and a survey of 2,500 public websites across Europe has shown that not one was fully accessible.

So, in Brussels last month, we brought together public officials, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) providers and disabled people to help get aims turned into reality.

We heard that priority would be given to implementing rules that encourage governments and public authorities to set out access criteria for goods and services bought.

The next step will be publishing a document on eAccessibility, a draft of which is available for consultation on the web.

At the event, the possibility of passing a law requiring authorities to make electronic data and information technology available to people with disabilities was discussed.

Innovations such as SMS texting and voice recognition systems demonstrate the potential of new technology to open access for disabled people. Our challenge is to make it available – as the EU says – to all.

Richard Howitt MEP is president of the EU All-Party Disability Rights Group of MEPs, e-mail: ep@edf-feph.org

Housing standards issued

Easy-to-read standards that disabled people should expect from housing associations were due to be published as *DN Extra* went to press.

The National Housing Federation was updating its "level threshold" document, published as a summary this autumn, following consultation with disabled tenants.

It gives a checklist to test housing services, including ensuring that associations help develop accessible homes and surrounding areas, use housing registers and

involve disabled people in planning and monitoring.

The document says that vulnerable residents should be identified for priority maintenance schemes; harassment of disabled people should be tackled; and associations could create wider community services including adult education classes.

Richard Clark, chair of the federation, said: "A person's home and neighbourhood have an enormous impact on their quality of life, especially for residents with

disabilities. Housing associations have a duty to ensure that all their residents have equal access to housing and services."

The summary is already available in 11 languages. Further versions, including a good practice guide, booklet, CD Rom and plain English electronic document that can be incorporated into other publications, will be released in January.

Find the summary version now at www.housing.org.uk/policy/view.asp?id=22

Holiday hell or holiday heaven? In January, *DN* starts its annual holiday coverage, featuring three months of readers' experiences and tips. If you've got a story you think others might like to read, hints for a hassle-free break or ideas about what you'd like to see *DN* cover, then get in touch with us either by emailing editor@disabilitynow.org.uk or by post at the usual address.



YOURS FOR FREE! *DN*'s exclusive 2005 calendar, featuring images taken by disabled photographers for the Freedom in Focus competition, is sponsored by Barclays. Designed by *DN*'s production editor Jamie Trounce, the full-colour, wall-hanging calendar is free to all readers who want one while stocks last. Send your name and address to Juliana Udezue, Disability Now, 6 Market Road, London N7 9PW. All donations will be gratefully received.

Sporting staff success



A company that includes climbing and abseiling among its team building exercises has won an award that celebrates best practice in employing disabled people.

Pack-it Promotions, a Cardiff-based packaging and distribution business, took the new "learning award" at this year's Leading the Way awards, which are run by Remploy, the UK's largest employer of disabled people.

The company employs 18 people, nine of them disabled, and

disabled people are represented on its board. It has structured induction programmes, on-the-job training and on-going support, such as personal development plans and job coaches.

Managing director John Bennett (*pictured centre with RADAR chief executive Kate Nash, Remploy chairman Alan Pedder and team members*) told DN: "Pack-it's biggest strength is all of us together. There is no disability within

the company we work in."

The overall award went to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) for going the extra mile in putting its policy, "Diversity is a strength which needs exploiting," into practice at its Southampton headquarters. Ten per cent of the 380 workers are disabled, and there are disabled people at all levels including on the executive board.

Meanwhile, outside the awards in London, four Remploy employees demonstrated against plans to redistribute the work of a fabric-cutting unit in Birkenhead, which they claimed would export jobs "at the cost of disabled people".

But Steve Scott, Remploy's external relations manager, said no jobs would be lost in Birkenhead and the change would in fact create more work opportunities.

In brief

Chief steps down

Arthritis Care's chief executive William Butler has resigned a month after the charity came close to losing its board of trustees to a vote of no confidence. Mr Butler leaves in January to become chief operating officer at drug and alcohol charity Addaction. An Arthritis Care spokesman said Mr Butler's decision had "no connection" to the ballot.

Benefit numbers

The number of direct payments offered in Scotland since councils there were forced to make them available (in June 2003) has increased by more than 70 per cent. The number offered this year was 912 according to the Scottish Executive, compared with 534 in 2003.

* See feature on direct payments, page 6.



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Take control with direct cash

Despite concerns that disabled people are not receiving the direct payments they should, John Pring reports that with the right support and information people can have the choices over services they want



Driving to London to help his daughter move house and not having to worry about what time he returned home to Bristol would have been impossible for Steve Bullock (pictured with care assistant Lisa Pobin) a few years ago.

Now, thanks to direct payments (DPs), he has been able to do just that as he decides when he receives assistance.

He has been receiving DPs to pay for his support package since 1997. "There is no way I would go back," he says. "The scheme just gives you too much flexibility. Now I live the life I choose."

This includes attending meetings as vice-chair of West of England Centre for Inclusive Living, which provides support for DP schemes, including his from South Gloucestershire council.

A law change in April 2003 compelled local authorities to offer direct payments.

Despite this change, community care minister

Stephen Ladyman told a National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) conference recently (DN Oct) that he was concerned DPs were "not taking off as people first hoped".

Despite such concerns, many experts remain optimistic.

Roy Webb, NCIL's head of policy, thinks the government's "very clear, very strong, very positive commitment" will help push DPs "very slowly" towards becoming a mainstream service.

Lucy Curzon, assistant manager of the Penderels Trust, which supports DP recipients from 18 councils across England and Wales, says:

"DPs are being offered as a first choice by care managers rather than something they would tack on the end of an assessment. All the local authorities we work with are now setting much better targets."

Essex and Derbyshire county councils have both led the way in offering DPs.

Essex provides independent advocacy and a support scheme run by disabled people.

The council points to a "culture change" in which instead of asking "why direct payments?" managers now ask "why not direct payments?"

Derbyshire says it is proactive in offering DPs. Its staff receive "extensive training" and it monitors feedback from service users.

So why are some other councils not doing as well?

Mr Webb says many disabled people still do not know about DPs and the support available. And he says many local authorities are finding it difficult to release money from long-term contracts with voluntary service providers. Also, many councils are still inflexible.

Earlier this autumn, the

Department of Health's Integrating Community Equipment Services (ICES) initiative complained that many councils were saying they "don't do" DPs for equipment. ICES says it is "imperative" that systems are in place to deal with such requests.

Mr Webb believes clearer government guidance would be "helpful".

So what should a disabled person considering DPs do? Mr Webb says the first step is to contact their local organisation of disabled people so they "feel confident and comfortable" about their decision.

Ms Curzon also advises contacting the DP scheme's support service.

And do DPs work?

The first two or three months can be hard work. After that, according to Mr Webb, disabled people say DPs are "wonderful... fabulous... the best thing they ever did".

Direct Payments

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- Can be made to disabled people over 16 who can consent to and manage the payments, with support if necessary. They can be made to parents of disabled children and carers.
- Can pay for personal assistance, equipment, respite care or even an assistance dog.

Information

- NCIL: www.ncil.org.uk
- The Department of Health's DP section: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/FinanceAndPlanning/DirectPayments/fs/en
- Penderels Trust: 0845 0500862 or www.penderelstrust.org.uk

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For an application pack please email **BM.CS@city-of-london.police.uk** or call Jen Brewster on **020 7601 2734**, quoting reference **A/RECROFF/CS**.

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Help Make London the Safest City in the World

Chief Executive, The Safer London Foundation

The Safer London Foundation is a new charity created to support community groups and individuals across the London area. Its aim is to reduce crime, help victims of crime, promote community cohesion and provide initiatives to divert young people away from criminal activity. It will lead, develop and/or fund community safety and crime reduction projects and work closely with the Metropolitan Police Safer Neighbourhoods programme.

The Foundation has the backing and support of the Metropolitan Police Authority, the Metropolitan Police Service and community groups. As a vital link between them, the Foundation shares their vision of making London the safest Capital city in the world. Its independence means that it can enable the MPA and MPS to support various community projects without compromising their integrity in law enforcement and crime investigation.

It has won seedcorn funding and some major business sponsors but aims to be self-sufficient after two years. It will therefore raise funds in

order to make grants to police and community projects, and meet its own costs.

As the Safer London Foundation's first Chief Executive, your priorities will be to:

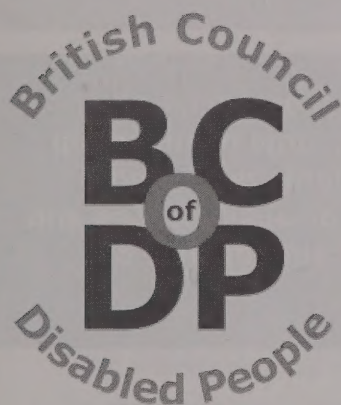
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- Represent the Foundation in every appropriate forum, working closely with all partners, communities, businesses, the media and other organisations to promote and achieve the Foundation's aims
- Support the non-executive Board of Directors, implement their decisions and manage the administration.

Your track record will demonstrate success in all relevant areas. Currently a Chief Executive or Director of a well-run well-regarded charity, your abilities and experience will include income generation, public relations and the innovative thinking needed to identify, shape and promote

projects which really deliver against objectives. Proven communication, leadership and influencing skills will be matched by sound judgement, strategic thinking and commercial acumen. Empathy with the Foundation's aims and an understanding of all the issues (especially equality and diversity) are essential; ideally you will have lived and worked in London for some time.

A strong Equality & Inclusion policy means that applications are encouraged from people with the appropriate skills and experience from across all communities and social groups. Whilst competitive, the salary level is determined by the Foundation's charitable status and start-up situation rather than the seniority and importance of the role. Its offices are in central London.

Please send your full CV (including your salary expectations) to the Foundation's recruitment advisor Andrew Burke, Principal Consultant, preferably by email to 1604@aegis-er.com or by post to him at Aegis Executive Resourcing, Winchester House, New Farm Road, Alresford, Hants SO24 9QH.



DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

(CAMPAIGNS, PRESS AND PARLIAMENTARY)

GRADE S02 (£24,000 TO £25,407)

BCODP is the umbrella organisation of the disabled people's movement.

We are looking for a disabled person with appropriate experience and skills to carry out effective lobbying and campaigning work to promote disabled people's human and civil rights based on the social model of disability.

The post will be managed from Derby.

Further details and application form, in accessible formats, will be available from Kevin Towler, BCODP, Litchurch Plaza, Litchurch Lane, Derby, DE24 8AA.

Email: kevint@bcodp.org.uk

Phone: **01332 295551.**

Minicom: **01332 295581.**

Fax: **01332 295580.**

Closing date: **26th November 2004**

Interviews will be held on: 10th December 2004 at Derby Office.

Support for disabled people

If you have a disability or health condition that affects your chances of finding or keeping a job, ask to see a Disability Employment Adviser, based in your local Jobcentre or Jobcentre Plus office.

They can provide:

- help with finding and keeping a job
- information on training
- support with benefit entitlement and programmes like New Deal; and
- advice on employing people with disabilities.



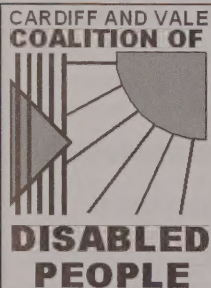
JobCentre

jobcentreplus

Part of the Department
for Work and Pensions

Contact your local Jobcentre or
Jobcentre Plus office for further
information.

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk



Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People is a local organisation of disabled people. With an active Executive Committee, large membership and a hard working staff team, the Coalition runs a highly respected Independent Living Scheme, lobbies Government on disability issues and represents the interests of disabled people in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan to service providers.

For an information pack and details on how to apply contact: Cardiff and Vale Coalition of Disabled People, Cowbridge Court, 60 Cowbridge Road West, Cardiff CF5 5BS. Tel: 029 20 255611 or email info@cvcdp.com. Please state your preferred format.

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS IS FRIDAY 26TH NOVEMBER

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

SALARY – SCALE POH - £33009

The Coalition is seeking to recruit a dynamic Chief Executive who has the vision, commitment and skills to successfully lead the organisation forward through a period of transition and expansion of our services, policies and membership development.

You will have proven all round management skills together with knowledge and experience of project and service development, voluntary sector funding, working to deadlines and collaborative working with staff, Executive Committee members, users and other statutory and voluntary organisations.

You will have direct experience of disability discrimination, knowledge of the disability sector and a commitment to the Social Model of disability.

THIS POST IS ONLY OPEN TO DISABLED PEOPLE



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Do you have a disability or a long-term health problem?

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www.rbli-employmentservices.org

Welsh Equality Committee seeks facilitator for reference group of disabled young people

The National Assembly for Wales's Equality of Opportunity Committee is seeking an individual or organisation to facilitate a reference group of disabled young people.

The reference group will advise and guide the Committee throughout its review of service provision for disabled young people, which is expected to last about two years. The professional facilitator will help bring the group together and ensure it is able to fully participate in the review.

They will be experienced in working directly with disabled young people on an individual and group basis.

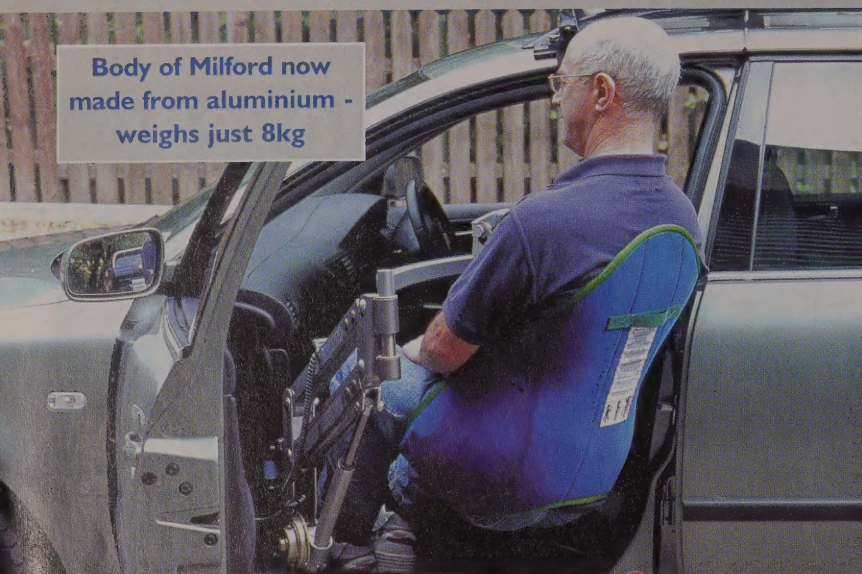
They will have a thorough understanding of the issues which affect disabled young people in Wales, the services available to them, the organisations, agencies and bodies that represent them, and the Assembly's approach and commitment to equality of opportunity and disability. The full terms of reference and scope of the review can be found on the Committee's web pages at www.wales.gov.uk

To receive a copy of the full specification for the facilitation services please contact Roger Chaffey, Equality of Opportunity Committee Clerk, tel: **029 2089 8409**, e-mail equality.comm@wales.gsi.gov.uk or write to Roger Chaffey, Equality of Opportunity Committee, National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay, CF99 1NA. The closing date for bids is **29 November 2004**.

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- Three sling sizes are available, with a 4-point connection for comfort and safety. Special slings also available. All slings fit around seated person. No need to lift person to fit sling.
- Lifts up to 17.5 stones (110 kgs).
- The lift mounting post is the only fixture to your vehicle and is simple to install.
- Simple to transfer to your next car, leaving your existing vehicle in its original condition.

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Wheelchair Loading System



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Automatic Wheelchair Carrier
Folds, lifts & stores manual wheelchairs



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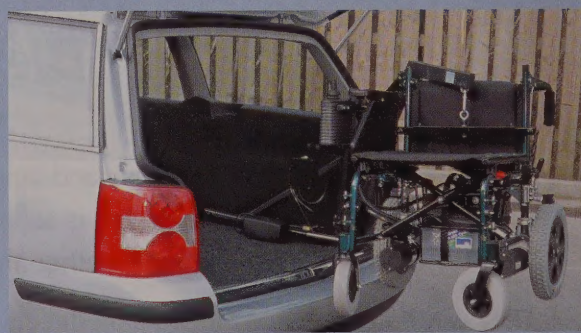
CARONY

Wheelchair into Vehicle System



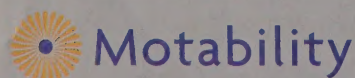
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